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# The Singapore Literature Prize 2006

*shortlist*



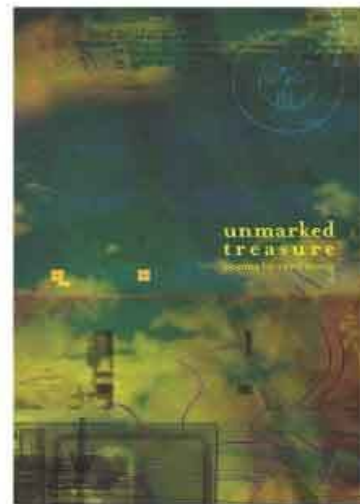
**Author: Cyril Wong**

**Title: unmarked treasure (Poetry)**

Cyril Wong is the winner of the National Arts Council's Young Artist Award for Literature in 2005. He is the author of five poetry collections and was featured at the Edinburgh International Book Festival and the Hong Kong International Literary Festival. Cyril's words have been set to dance, film, drama and music; these collaborations have been presented in Hong Kong, Australia, France, Malaysia, Indonesia and the States. His poems have internationally appeared in Atlanta Review, Poetry International, The Cortland Review, among others. He will also be featured in the upcoming W.W. Norton & Co. anthology, Contemporary Voices from the East (2007).

### **Synopsis of unmarked treasure:**

Cyril Wong's evocative and sensual poems unravel the disappointments and promises of childhood and family, in a language that is pure rapture and untainted by bitterness. These poems continue to pulsate long after the lights have gone out. There is also a sequence of poems about a series of photographs that exist only in the poet's mind, relating to themes of emotional loss and recovery. unmarked treasure sculpts a space for the reader to think, baffle over and be elated.





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**Author: Aaron Sahhriil Yusoff Maniam**

**Title: Morning at Memory's Border (Poetry)**

Aaron Sahhriil Yusoff Maniam has been mentored by poets such as Ho Poh Fun (1994) and Lee Tzu Pheng (1996) under the auspices of the Creative Arts Programme (CAP). He attended the Austin International Poetry Festival in 2004. *Morning at Memory's Border*, his first collection of poetry, was published in 2005. Aaron's work has also appeared in the online poetry journal *Stylus*, Singapore youth anthologies *First Words* and *onewinged*, as well as the CAP's *Eye on the World* series.

## **Synopsis of *Morning at Memory's Border***

*Morning-at-Memory's-Border* is about chronicling - stamping ownership on the past, recognising its shaping of the present and influence on the future. One important path to this - as in the title - is to territorialise Memory, to give it borders and a semblance of physical substance.

'Mornings' is a percolation of nascent schoolboy thoughts, not completely understood then.

'Memories' broadens the focus from the individual to what is variously called community, society or nation.

'Borders' situates the self within a broader global identity. Globalisation can sometimes breed rootlessness, but these poems explore the self-in-the-world, finding synergy and confluence.





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**Author: Yong Shu Hoong**

**Title: Frottage (Poetry)**

Yong Shu Hoong has published three books of poetry: *Isaac* (1997), *dowhile* (2002) and *Frottage* (2005). He has also written for publications like *The Straits Times* and *South China Morning Post*. He regularly participates in literary festivals in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Australia and the US as well as organise monthly subTEXT readings at the Central Lending Library.

**Synopsis of Frottage:**

Frottage: A technique for creating designs by using pencil or charcoal to rub over paper placed against a surface. In his third book, Yong Shu Hoong lets the edge of poetry mark his personalised impressions of Australia. But do not expect a collection that seeks to challenge a long-time resident's familiarity with the terrain, local cultures and colloquial speech. His are etchings borne from an outsider's clarity of observation and oftentimes reflections sparked by a traveller's vague notions and remembrance. As exploration deepens, it becomes clear that Australia connects back to him and his homeland of Singapore in more ways than one.







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**Author: Chia Joo Ming ( 谢裕民 )**

**Title: 《 重构南洋图像 》 (Short stories)**

**Chia Joo Ming's** literary talent is widely acknowledged. The current Deputy Director of LianHe ZaoBao had received the Golden Lion Literary Award several times. He was presented with the Young Artist Award in 1993 and in 1995, was invited to participate in the International Writing Project.

**Synopsis of 《 重构南洋图像 》 :**

This selection features 3 compositions of Chia Joo Ming. He experiments with novel structures and techniques, crafting narratives that are a refreshing exercise in creativity. These works present images of life in a fast-paced, modern society, exploring the different facets of Chinese migration to South East Asia. The emotional interaction and attachment of peoples in the early Twentieth Century are illuminated via this fascinating collection.





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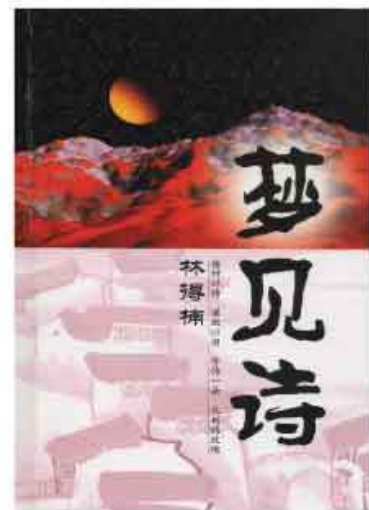
**Author: Denon Lim Denan ( 林得楠 )**

**Title: 《 梦见诗 》 (Poetry)**

**Denon Lim Denan** started writing in his youth. From 1984 – 1994, he was the news editor for Lian He Zao Bao. Because his work commitments did not leave him with too much time on his hands; he stopped writing temporarily. In 2001, he won the second Prize for the Golden Pen Awards. He won the first prize in 2003.

## **Synopsis of 《 梦见诗 》 :**

This collection is a poignant reminder of the conflict between dream and reality. Using the surrealistic setting and poetic license of the dream, Denan presents our insignificance, our deepest desires as well as the love inherent in the ostensibly barren landscape of modern times. The language is simply but stark, conveying effectively the profundity and beauty which might grace even the mundane chores of everyday life.





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**Author: Chia Hwee Pheng ( 希尼尔 )**

**Title: 《 希尼尔微型小说 》 (Short stories)**

**Chia Hwee Pheng** was born in Singapore in 1957, and writes under the pen name of Xi Ni'er. He received the First Prize for the "Golden Lion Literary Awards" twice, in 1982 & 1993, and the Book Awards from The National Book Development Council of Singapore (NBDCS) (1990 & 1994). His works include *Kidnapping Times* and *The Stretched Credulity* (poetry), *The Unbearable*

*Heaviness of Life*, *The Earnest Mask* and *The Collection of Xi Ni'er Mini-Fiction* (mini-fiction). He is currently the President of Singapore Association of Writers.

## **Synopsis of 《 希尼尔微型小说 》 :**

The collection consists of 52 mini-fictions written in the span of past 25 years. The author is a master craftsman in the experimentation of mini-fiction writing. Each work is a further expansion of the threshold of the art form. Besides being celebrated by readers for his keen observations, his stories astutely chronicle both the light moments as well as the difficult times in the forty years of nation building. His works are like colourful mosaics that form the fabric of the Singaporean collective consciousness.







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**Author: Mohamed Latiff B. Mohamed**

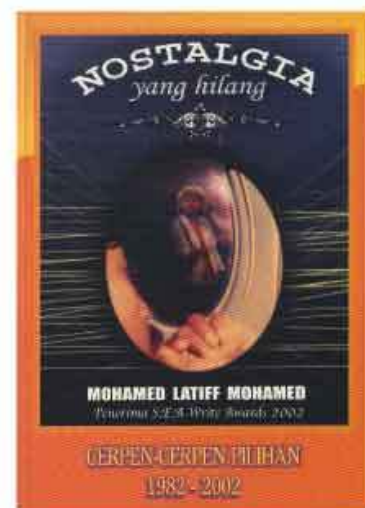
**Title: *Nostalgia Yang Hilang* (Short stories)**

**Mohamed Latiff Bin Mohamed** started writing in 1966, when his short story *4 PM* won the first prize for the Ani Cintamu Masih Usang Competition. In 1988, he won the Mont Blanc-NUS Literary Award and in 2002 was given the prestigious S.E.A. Write Award. His works include novels such as *Dalam Keasingan* (1989) and *Ziarah Rindu* (2003). The three children's books to his name --

*Hancurnya Sindiket Dadah*, *Derita Seorang Pelukis Muda* and *Rahsia Di Jalan Cempaka Unggu* were all written in 1977.

### **Synopsis of *Nostalgia Yang Hilang*:**

*Nostalgia Yang Hilang* is a collection of 21 of the best short stories ever written by Mohamed Latiff. This book holds varieties of themes which include humanity, love, poverty, religion, and finally the theme of disappointment about developments that encroach on the past, which became the title of this book – The lost Nostalgia. This collection has a fair balance of realistic and satirical approaches in short stories writing. The strength of this book lies in the magnificent description of the characters, setting, and events with a very dramatic play of words and discourse.





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**Author: Anuar Othman**

**Title: *Kisah Di Bukit Cermin* (Short stories)**

Anuar Othman's short story, "Hashimoto-san", won the 1st prize in the 1997 Golden Point Awards: SPH-NAC Short Story Writing Competition and the 3rd prize for the Mimpi Shakespeare (Dream Shakespeare) Competition in 1999. In 2001, he won 1st prize in the poetry category. Anuar Othman has published 11 books to date, and has also written radio and television plays, literary essays, novels and song lyrics. He was selected as the ambassador for the National Library Board in 2006's Celebrating Libraries campaign.

**Synopsis of *Kisah di Bukit Cermin*:**

Published in 2005, *Kisah di Bukit Cermin* consists of 12 short stories which explore various aspects of the Malay identity in Singapore. His stories are vivid delineations of the conundrum that his characters find themselves in when caught painfully between two worlds. Even while weaving a rich tapestry of history and tradition, Anuar also acknowledges the encroachment of modernisation. He voices anxieties that progress might lead to the erosion of the Malay language, customs and religious way of life. This engaging anthology of short stories by a prolific and accomplished Singapore author, presents a poignant slice of the dilemmas afflicting present-day Malays.







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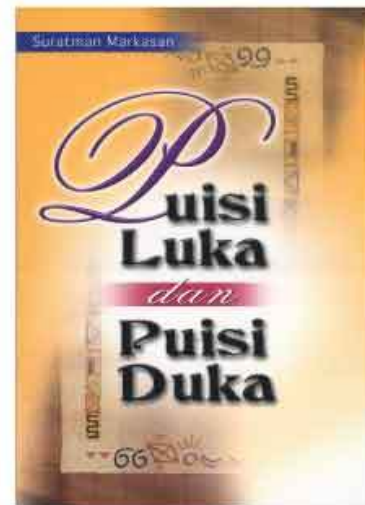
**Author : Suratman Markasan**

**Title : *Puisi Luka dan Puisi Duka* (Poetry)**

**Suratman Markasan** was appointed as inspector, Malay Language and Literature, at MOE in 1976. In 1980, he became the Assistant Director, Malay and Tamil Studies. A year later he was appointed as lecturer at the *NIE* and retired in 1985. He received the *SEA Writers Award in 1989*; the *Montblance-NUS Centre for the Arts Literary Awards in 1997*; *Nusantara Literary Award in 1999*; *Tun Seri Lanang Literary Award in 1999* and *Anugerah Pujangga in 2003*.

#### **Synopsis of *Puisi Luka Dan Puisi Duka*:**

The 17 poems in *Poems of Hurt and Poems of Grief* are set against the backdrop of war-torn Singapore, reflecting the suffering of the commoners during the British Colonial era right through to independence. The narratives span a number of continents - they are set in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and a number of European countries as well as the US. They illustrate the world today as one that is ever-changing as it rages towards war and destruction.





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**Author: Peter Augustine Goh**

**Title: *Warna sebuah Penghijrahan* (Novel)**

**Peter Augustine Goh** is a translator by profession. He writes short stories, poetry, novels, and children's novels, essays, drama scripts for radio and TV. All these genres are written in Malay. He has published several books and has won the 1983, 1984, 1986 and 1989 National Short Story Writing Competition merit awards. Goh also received the Malay Literary Awards in 1982, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2005; the NBDCS Award for fiction in 1994, 1996; and the 3rd prize and 2nd prize in the 1995 and 1999 Golden Point Awards: SPH/NAC Short Story Writing Competition respectively. In 2003, he won the Golden Point Award first prize for poetry in the SPH/NAC Poetry Writing competition.

**Synopsis of *Warna sebuah Penghijrahan*:**

This novel revolves around the social ills that plague the youths of Singapore. It touches on grave issues such as youth gangsterism, drug addiction, betrayal, peer pressure and irresponsibility. Goh addresses these issues in a wide-ranging exploration of the marginalised sectors of society. A compassionate delineation of the pains and struggles that delinquents face, *Warna sebuah Penghijrahan* provides readers with an entry-point into their difficult-fraught journeys.





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**Author: Johar Bin Buang**

**Title: *Cahaya di Negeri ini* (Poetry)**

**Johar Bin Buang** is reputed as a poet in the Malay Archipelago. His writings have gained a wide audience base in the Malay Archipelago and are frequently debated over and cited during literary research discussions. Johar is the recipient of several awards such as the Literature Prize Anugerah Persuratan, Golden Point Award, Literature Award Anugerah Sastera Darul Iman Malaysia, NBDCS

Book Award and Islamic Poetry Prize Negara Brunei Darussalam. His published collections of poetry include: *Cahaya Di Negeri Ini* (*Light In This Country*) *Sahara*, *Dinding-Dinding Kaca* (*Glass Of Walls*), *Cinta Pohon Tamar* (*Love Of The Date Tree*).

## **Synopsis of *Cahaya Di Negeri Ini*:**

The poems in *Cahaya Di Negeri Ini* (*Light in This Country*) are pensive reflections on life in a cosmopolitan city, in particular Singapore, the birth place of the writer. The spiritual and intellectual domains of life are the main themes in this poetry collection. In this collection, Johar incorporates novel techniques into the crafting of his fifty-three poems. Thematic concerns universal in scope come alive under his highly-stylised writings, providing many startling intellectual jolts into the meaning of life.







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**Author: K. Kanagalatha**

**Title: *Paampuk Kaattil oru Taazai* (Poetry)**

LATHA has published two collections of modern Tamil poetry: *Theeveli* (2003) and *Paampuk Kaattil Oru Thaazhai* (2005). Her poems have been anthologized in *Journeys: Words, Home and Nation*, a multilingual anthology by The Centre for the Arts, NUS (1995); *Rhythms - A Singaporean Millennial Anthology of Poetry* by the NAC (2000); and *Kanavum Vidiyum - Anthology of Contemporary Tamil Poetry by Women Poets* by the Sahitya Academy of India (2003).

Her bilingual poem *Still Human* was also featured in *Poems on the Move* series on the MRT trains. Her poems and short stories have also appeared in literary journals like *Kanayaazhi* (India), *Kaalachuvadu* (India), *Uyir nizhal* (France) and *Sarinigar* (Sri Lanka). *Theeveli* is used as a BA literary text in Periyar University, Tamil Nadu, India. She is currently a News Editor with *Tamil Murasu*.

**Synopsis of *Paampuk Kaattil oru Taazai*  
(A Screwpine in Snakeforest):**

An accessible collection of poetry that is armed and ready to engage every reader on some level. She is a poet who reflects on the complex connections between humans and their social substructures. One cannot fail to be touched, provoked and dazzled by the penetrating prismatic perspective and satirical strength of her poems on the personal to the societal. Her poems serve as a metaphor for the disordered world, both private and public and often yield lines of surprising beauty and power.





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**Author: Mohamed Iqbal**

**Title: *Vanavargal Mannil Irukkirarkal (Poetry)***

**Mohamed Iqbal** has contributed poems, literary articles, short stories and radio plays to the region's newspapers, magazines as well as radio programmes since 1957. To date, he has published 7 poetry collections. He received the S.E.A. Write Award 2001 from Thailand and the Kala Ratna Award 2004 from the Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society.





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**Author: Kavignararu Amallathasan**

**Title : *Pullanguzhal* (Poetry)**

**Kavignararu Amallathasan** is the advisor of the Association of Tamil Writers. Aged 66, he has been writing since 1958. He has written more than 1,500 poems, songs and children's songs on various themes such as nation, language, community, nature, love, philosophy, etc. his poems have been published by magazines and newspapers from Singapore, Malaysia and even Tamil Nadu.

Pon Poets Society of Malaysia honoured him in 1989 for his literary works and awarded him the title "Kavignararu" (Majestic Poet) in gold. In 1995, Bharathidasan Movement of Malaysia honoured him with the Golden Shawl and Shield. In 2001, he received the Tamizhar Thirunal (Tamizhar Festival) Award from the Singapore United Indian Muslim Association.







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**Author: Murugathasan**

**Title: Vadamalar (Poetry)**

**Murugathasan** started writing poems, stories, poetic dramas and essays while working as an electrician. He has published 11 books, among which *Kavadi Sinthu* was the first to be launched. This was followed by *Vazhvarulvaal Vadakaali*, *Vanavil*, *Netrikkan*, *Azhagoviyum*, *Thenmalargal*, *Murugathasan Kavithaigal* and the recently launched *Thaempaavi* and *Vaadamalargal*.

He also has a keen interest in theatrical productions and to date, has staged 15 performances, both on stage and on broadcast television. He is fondly remembered for his role in the traditional Tamil stage programme "Villupaattu".

Murugathasan was awarded the "Paathendral" title by the Sithaanantha Adigal of Singapore Thamizhar Iyakkam in 1976, the "Villisai Vaenthar" title by Thamizhavel Nadaga Mandram in 1993, and the South East Asia Literature Award by the National Arts Council and Mont Blanc.

